

National Records of Scotland

Compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

14 December 2021

1. Voluntary Statement of Compliance

This statement shows how the National Records of Scotland (NRS) have followed the principles of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) in the production and release of the [Administrative Data Based Population Estimates, Scotland 2016-2018](#) as statistical research.

NRS is committed to adhering to the highest standards of analysis. While NRS does produce a range of Official Statistics, the findings in the Administrative Data Based Population Estimates (ABPE), Scotland 2016-2018 are not considered Official Statistics. The methodology has changed since the publication of ABPE 2016, and we expect the methodology to change further in future publications. Because of this, we feel it is too early for these statistics to meet the requirements for Official Statistics (including experimental statistics).

One of the main reasons for publishing these statistics as statistical research is to support discussions with data suppliers and stakeholders on the application of this work. We have engaged with stakeholders on the ABPE 2016, and included their feedback in our development of the ABPE 2016-2018. We will continue to work with stakeholders to gain their feedback on outputs produced and methodology developments for administrative data based population estimates and to inform future developments.

Although not Official Statistics, this work has voluntarily adopted the principles of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and complies as much as possible, which is why we are voluntarily applying to be [Voluntary Adopters](#) of the Code of Practice for this release.

The Code of Practice for Statistics has three pillars:

- Trustworthiness
- Quality
- and Value

NRS also publish the National Statistics on Mid-Year Population Estimates. This is the publication that users should refer to when they require population figures for Scotland.

2. Trustworthiness – trusted people, systems and processes

NRS is a Non-Ministerial Department of the Scottish Government and as such is accountable to the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture and ultimately to the Scottish Parliament.

NRS has recruited professional statisticians who are part of the Scottish Government Statistician Professional Group and the Government Statistical Service (GSS). As part of the GSS individuals undertake a commitment to maintain professional standards and participate in continuous professional development.

They have a professional line of accountability to the Head of Profession for Statistics in NRS and to the Chief Statistician for the Scottish Government who has a professional line of accountability to the National Statistician.

The [Administrative Data Based Population Estimates, Scotland 2016-2018](#) has been made available on the NRS website. The following extra material has been produced, to provide transparency to users of the estimates:

- [Administrative Data Based Population Estimates, Scotland 2016-2018 – Methodology Report](#)
- [Administrative Data Based Population Estimates, Scotland 2017-2018 – Quality Assurance of Administrative Dataset](#)
- [Data Protection Impact Assessment \(DPIA\) - Administrative Data Based Population and Household Estimates Project](#)

There were improvements on the methodology (version 1) since the publication of the ABPE 2016 in December 2020. The revisions to the ABPE 2016 are specified in our publication. In accordance with NRS's revision policy and the code of practise, we have revised the 2016 data using version 2 of methodology to allow trend analysis between the three years.

A DPIA has been published on the NRS website since 2019, to allow data users to see progress for this project. The DPIA covers how we have de-identified the data and used a third-party trusted module to process the data, as per data management best practice. It also includes information on our stakeholder engagement for the project over the period. The DPIA is reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure that it accurately captures the relevant information and has been updated for the publication in December 2021.

NRS has, and will continue to, pre-announce the dates of forthcoming statistical research papers on administrative data based population estimates. This report was pre-announced 12 weeks prior to publication on the [NRS](#) and [Scottish Government's](#) Forthcoming Publication calendar.

3. Quality - Robust data, methods and processes

The administrative data that is used in this publication undergoes rigorous checks at source from the data providers. Once the data has been received by NRS the data sources are assessed by statisticians for their accuracy, reliability, quality and suitability for use in this project. A summary Quality Assurance of Administrative Datasets (QAAD) of each dataset has been published after checking the content with the data provider for accuracy. As part of the QAAD report, the team has reviewed the quality of the outputs in relation to their analysis.

We have consulted the Demography Team in NRS who produce the National Statistics for mid-year population estimates in Scotland as part of the quality assurance process. The Demography Team are the topic experts on population estimates within NRS.

NRS has had discussions with stakeholders on the strengths and limitations of the data used and the underpinning methodology. NRS will continue to have these

discussions based on the updated population estimates. This will help to continue to identify areas for improvement in the methodology and additional datasets that could improve the quality of the outputs.

4. Value – efficiency, proportionality and accessibility

The efficiency and proportionality of these population estimates lies in that no bespoke data collection is required, instead using existing data sources to produce population estimates with an innovative methodology.

The value of this statistical research publication is to contribute to the body of work that is used to make recommendations for future censuses and demographic statistics. NRS work with other national statistical agencies to support our respective programmes on greater use of administrative data within demographic statistics.

All information relating to this publication is accessible on the NRS website. Given the nature of these statistics and the methodology used to create them, a two tiered approach has been adopted to disseminate this information. A high level summary of the methodology has been provided in the main publication and a more technically detailed report has been produced for a statistical audience and data users in the field of data linkage.

There was a number of stakeholder events during 2021 to present the population estimates and methodology. We have engaged with users from a range of backgrounds to understand their needs e.g. academics, statisticians and analysts, local authority representatives and main demographic users. As there research is published on NRS website any user can contact us for information.

As a result of stakeholder discussions, NRS have expanded its analysis. In this publication there is more information at council area level and more output in general covering the three years using [interactive charts](#). The next publication hopes to start looking at migration within Scotland.

NRS have also started exploring other datasets to support this analysis as identified by users. We will continue to meet with data users to discuss the research and identify other improvements that will help to meet their needs.